

SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

OUR STORY TOO

LESSON 15, INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY: BOTH SPIRITUALITY AND JUSTICE

In this second lesson on THE ROLE OF BLACK PEOPLE IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY, you will be listening to an audio cassette tape featuring Jeremiah Wright, who is a black pastor in Chicago, Illinois (Trinity Church - UCC). This address by Wright on "Spirituality and Justice" was presented at the 1986 Congress on Urban Ministry. The purpose in including this taped message in this course is to point out the gift that Black Christianity could give to all of Christianity, namely an incarnational theology that holds together both spirituality and justice. Not all individual black churches proclaim and live an incarnational theology, to be sure, but Black Christianity, because of its history and development in the U.S., clearly points out the need for such a theology. Moreover, there are many concrete demonstrations of incarnational theology being lived out in individual black churches.

Listen to this tape all the way through first; it is about 45 minutes long. Then go through it again and answer the study questions in the space provided.

Then make a clear photocopy of your study question pages with your responses, or type your responses on separate sheets of paper. Send this second copy of your responses back for grading to the Samaritan faculty member who coordinates correspondence courses. The address is on the cover letter.



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(A) *Spirituality and Justice*

- (1) To underscore the importance of both spirituality and justice, Wright cites the prophecy recorded in Micah 6:6-8, namely, that which is good and which God asks of us is:

- (a) to _____
(b) to _____
(c) to _____

- (2) Wright quotes a 1843 speech of Henry Highland Garnett, in which this well-known black Presbyterian pastor declared that black slaves should seek freedom through force if necessary. In a one-paragraph essay explain what led Garnett and others to insist on justice and freedom now and not in the "sweet bye-and-bye"? How does the black spiritual "Oh Freedom" illustrate their feelings?

- (3) Wright also cites a 1838 speech of Frederick Douglas in which this escapee from slavery describes how racism infects white Christians, making them hypocritical and poor examples of Christian faith. In a one-paragraph essay explain what Wright means when he says there are two different views of God and humankind (the masters' view and the slaves' view, white religion and black religion), and these two different views are inherently antithetical.

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- (4) Wright also cites the 1968 Kerner Commission Report (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) headed by Otto Kerner, Governor of State of Illinois. This Presidential Commission warned that North America is heading toward two different societies: white people and people of color. Two dangers that would result from this drift toward two different societies would be sustained violence in the cities and the repudiation of the American ideals of freedom, dignity, and equal opportunity for all. In a one-paragraph essay give your personal response. In your view, is this where North America is heading? Are we there already? Are the dangers real?

- (5) James Forbes and others (Jones and Gardner) insist on an incarnational theology, in which things that do not normally seem to go together (spirit and flesh, divinity and humanity, the infinite and the finite) do hang together in dialectical tension.

In a two-paragraph essay explain and give your personal response to Gardner's contention that love and justice are both necessary and that they have to go together, that one without the other means the nullification of both. Explain what he means. Does this ring true to your own personal experience?

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- (6) James Forbes presents a four point paradigm for how spirituality and justice are an extension of the incarnation. Outline these four points.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

- (7) Wright explains how a commitment to both spirituality and justice can work out in the real life of a local church by outlining the various activities of his church. How could such a commitment to both spirituality and justice be acted in a local MCC congregation? Explain in an essay of one or two paragraphs.

- (8) Forbes maintains that our theology is basic to all else. Theology is all-important because it determines anthropology, and anthropology determines sociology.

By this he means that how one views _____ determines how one views _____; and how one views _____ determines how one _____.

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- (9) Since theology is basic to everything else, according to Wright, Theology can lead to a unified nation or to segregation. Theology can lead to equality among all persons or to apartheid. Theology can lead to a witness for peace or to World War III. Theology can lead to equal distribution of goods and resources or to greed. Theology can lead to salvation (God-centeredness) or to sin (self-centeredness).

So, Wright maintains, we need a new theology if we are truly serious about both spirituality and justice. We need a theology that takes the incarnation seriously, that takes both souls and society seriously, that understands the church as an extension of the incarnation.

Do you agree that we need a new theology? Explain why or why not in a one-page essay.

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LESSON 16, THE LIFE OF A BLACK CHRISTIAN: SOJOURNER TRUTH

This is the third and final lesson on THE ROLE OF BLACK PEOPLE IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY. It is an indepth look at one black Christian. The reading assignment for this lesson is the articles on Sojourner Truth by Joyce Hollyday, Alice Walker, Jacquelyn Grant, and Catherine Meeks, which are found on pages 163-176 of this course manual. Read thess articles all the way through first. Then go through them again and answer the study questions in the space provided.

Then make a clear photocopy of your study question pages with your responses, or type your responses on separate sheets of paper. Send this second copy of your responses back for grading to the Samaritan faculty member who coordinates correspondence courses. The address is on the cover letter.

